SYNOPSIS

INTRODUCTION

The word ‘tour’ has a source from the Hebrew word *‘torah’* which means learning, studying or searching. The word ‘Tourism’ which relates to tour is derived from the Latin word ‘*tomos*’ which means a tool for describing a circle. History of civilized world reveals that man has been fascinated by travel and has the urge to discover the unknown, to explore new and strange places, to seek changes of environment and to undergo new experiences. Travel to achieve these ends is not new, but tourism is relatively a modern concept and the development of transport, accommodation and communication facilities make tourism with a broader business base.

The spread of education, advancements in science and technology and progress in industrialization have led to tremendous economic and social progress in India and the world at large. In the words of Hunziker& Krapf (1942),“ tourism is the totality of the relationship and phenomena arising from the travel and stay of strangers, provided that the stay does not imply the establishment of a permanent residence and is not connected with a remunerated activity”. Progress and growth in transport and communication, growth in the educational standard, emergence of a class with changed attitude in life style and spending habit, increased stress and strain in life made the people to have more affinity towards tourism in Kerala. Creation of various niche tourism products, branding of tourism, innovative approaches in the government policy towards tourism, conservation of nature and heritage and the effective use of Information Technology in tourism field has facilitated growth in Tourist Arrivals and the total revenue generated from tourism to the State of Kerala at a higher rate than that of the national average, over the last few years and it thus made tourism, both domestic and foreign, a successful and sustainable venture in Kerala.

Culture has always been a major object of travel and the cultural attractions play an important role in tourism at all levels, from the global highlights of world culture to attractions that underpin local identities. (Richards, 1996). Heritage tourism is a branch of tourism oriented towards the cultural heritage of the location where tourism is occurring.

Heritage tourism is concerned with identification, management and protection of the heritage values, understanding the impact of tourism on communities and regions, achieving economic and social benefits, providing financial resources for protection. (J. M. Fladmark, 1994).

The concept of Heritage tourism has great significance in world tourism market. When compared to other segments of tourism, heritage tourism account for larger share of tourism at the international and national level. Though heritage tourism is a segment of tourism, with its unique features and wider employment potential, it facilitates to project the ancestral heredity without loosing or deteriorating the asset base or ecology or moral values.The study has been made to describe the present position and condition of heritage tourism, features and significance of major heritage tourist centers, support given by government and other agencies and the problems and prospects of heritage tourism in Kerala.

SIGNIFICIANCE OF THE STUDY.

Since tourism business is directly in touch with the living beings coming from different parts of the world with vivid nature, culture, tradition and outlook, it is ideal to have regular assessment, evaluation about the policy, procedures and practices in tourism sector. This will facilitate to provide information to the planners and policy makers to device appropriate steps and strategies, wherever necessary, to vitalize the tourism industry in Kerala. In this context the study about the present conditions, problems and prospects related to heritage tourism in Kerala is of the greatest significance.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study has the following objectives.

1. To narrate the present position and condition of heritage tourism in Kerala.
2. To evaluate the level of support given by government and non-government agencies towards heritage tourism promotion in Kerala.
3. To assess the commercial viability of Heritage tourism in Kerala.

4. To line up the specific problems faced by heritage tourism in Kerala.
5. To identify and narrate the commercial prospects of heritage tourism in Kerala.

HYPOTHESES:

The following hypotheses have been formulated.

H_0 = Seasonal variation in the flow of tourists to the heritage tourist centers, does not vary significantly between foreign and domestic tourists.

H_0 = There is no significant variation between foreign and domestic tourists to the heritage centers, in terms of rate of change in earnings with a corresponding change in number of tourists arrived.

METHODOLOGY

The study is both descriptive and analytical in nature and is based on primary and secondary data. Discussions and interview with officials of tourism department and tour operators, staff of hotels and home stay enabled to secure relevant information pertaining to the study. Presently there is no mechanism of a databank at the heritage tourist centers, especially for the domestic tourists. This made it difficult to get an authentic data about the distribution of tourists on the basis of income level, age, and educational qualification, occupational and marital status. This made to rely on the provisional estimates gathered from various sources like tour operators, tourist guides, shop owners and the like.

The information available from published and unpublished materials, computerized data base and internet relating to home and foreign tourists, the destinations visited, number of days stayed etc. were made available for the study. Information gathered from the officials of Department of Tourism (DoT), Government of Kerala, District Tourism Promotion Councils (DTPCs), and the officials of various heritage centers and different travel agencies were made use of in this study.

Separate structured interview schedules were used to interview the foreign and domestic tourists found available at the heritage tourist centers in the selected districts of Kerala. The interview with selected tourists, both domestic and foreign, was made purely

on the basis of convenience and accessibility and the survey period is limited to October 2010 to March 2011. Major source of secondary data consisted of the materials gathered from State Planning Board, Government of Kerala and the publications of tourism department, Government of Kerala. The coverage is limited to the state of Kerala and the scope is limited to the heritage tourism sector. The period of study is limited to a five years commencing from 2005 to 2009.

FRAME OF ANALYSIS

The information gathered from various respondents, published and unpublished documents made available from various sources were synthesized for data analysis and interpretation. The statistical analysis, both inferential and descriptive, was made. The primary data is appropriately tabulated, analyzed and objectively interpreted with the help of arithmetic mean, percentages and scaled score values. Average, coefficient of variation, growth rates and index values are used to evolve findings from secondary data. The inferential statistics like correlation, regression and time series analysis was used appropriately. Coefficient of Determination, 'F' test and 't' test results are used to test the hypotheses.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY.

It is mandatory to incorporate information and data pertaining to international tourists by all concerned. Accordingly, the availability of statistics pertaining to foreign tourists is rather easy and reliable. Regarding the domestic tourists most of the tour operators, travel agents and other agencies in the private sector were not willing to disclose something more than the estimates pertaining to their operations. This made the reliability factor to come down. By repeated observations and counter checking, maximum effort has been taken to reduce this handicap. The study doesn't consider the tourism ventures undertaken by freelance tourists both from outside and inside the country. The period of study covered is limited to 2005 –'09.

Despite the limitations mentioned above, earnest efforts have been made to make this study more accurate, useful and meaningful.

SCHEME OF REPORT

The thesis is divided into five chapters. First chapter deals with preface, introduction, methodology and literature review. The second chapter deals with growth, development and the present scenario of heritage tourism in Kerala. The third chapter makes an overall description about the heritage centers in Kerala and an evaluation about its functional aspects. The fourth chapter deals with Problems and prospects of heritage tourism in Kerala. The fifth chapter deals with Findings, conclusions & recommendations.

MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

1. When the Number of foreign tourists arrived during the period under review showed varying trend across the period, it was observed to be consistently increasing as far as the domestic tourists are concerned.
2. On account of the arrival of foreign tourists, Thrissur district with an average number of 1,28,405 came ahead of others, Pathanamthitta district with an average of 5,221 accounted for the minimum.
3. On analysing the number of domestic heritage tourists arrived in each district, it is clear that Thrissur district with an average of 19,025 came ahead of others and Kasargod district having 919 accounted for the minimum in this regard.
4. The average number of foreign tourists arrived at the heritage centers came to 309 with extreme figures of 1499 in Thiruvananthapuram and 4 in Palakkad, showing wide variation in between the districts.
5. The seasonal indices as given by time series analysis revealed that the months from October to March was regarded as peak months of visit for foreign tourists while it is October to January for domestic tourists.
6. When the seasonal index for January-March season was 148.53, it was 122.21 for October –December season. It was found that October to March period observed peak

arrival of foreign tourists and months from June to August recorded a lean performance.

7. Regarding domestic tourist, the variations between seasons are not very wide. When the seasonal index for October – December season was 111.33, it came to 101.12 for April June season.

8. Arrival of foreign tourist to heritage centers observed an index of 148.97 in January-March period and 124.31 during October –December period. The lean period recorded being April-June (57.71) and July- September (69.01)

9. Arrival of Domestic tourists to heritage centers observed an index of 108.23 during is October- December and 101.40 during April-June period.

10. The seasonal index recorded against Ernakulam and Thiruvananthapuram was found to be more or less steady across during the period under review. It was found that during the month of April and May the number of domestic tourists arrived in almost all districts was rather high and the rate was comparatively more in Idukki, Wynad, Thrissur,Palakkad and Kozhikode.

11. The number of foreign tourists arrived in Kerala and the corresponding foreign exchange earnings indicated a high degree of relationship. On coming to the visit to the heritage centers, the degree of relationship was much more than this. Again, 99.51 per cent of the variation in foreign exchange earning is being explained by the change in the number of tourists arrived.

12. Regarding domestic tourists in general, the trend was more or less similar to that of foreign tourists but the gravity was found to be less. It is also observed that 98.65 per cent of the variation in the annual earnings from tourism is being explained by the change in the number of domestic tourist arrived in heritage centers.

13. There are a large number of heritage sites and monuments which are not adequately attracted by the tourists, particularly those from Kerala.

14. Government of Kerala does not have a specific heritage tourism policy to ensure support and protection to heritage tourist centers and it is observed that a systematic survey has not so far been made to identify prospective cultural zones and to document the same

15. When many of the archaeological sites are occupied by modern settlements or agricultural lands, many of the major heritage tourist destinations are identified and fostered by the people in the private sector and at the operational level they are functioning well.

16. The concept of community archaeology is not found among Kerala people. The general public, local administrative bodies and voluntary agencies are not found to have any deep involvement in matters relating to heritage management and conservation. The standard of the existing infrastructure, basic amenities and public hygiene are not adequate enough.

17. Since the calculated value of 't'$_{0.05}$ is 24.766 and it exceeds the table value 3.1693, it is established that hypothesis number 1, there is significant linear relationship between mean foreign exchange earnings and the number of foreign tourist arrived in Kerala is found to be established. Since the calculated value of't'0.05 is 5.58 and it exceeds the table value 3.1693, it is concluded that there is significant relationship between the annual mean earnings, and the number of domestic tourist arrived in Kerala.

18. Based on the Slope as indicated by the Regression analysis, it is observed that considerable variation in the rate of earnings is observed against the foreign tourists arrived in heritage centers when compare to that of domestic tourists and hence the hypothesis number 2, that there is no significant variation between foreign and domestic tourists to the heritage centers, in terms of rate of change in earnings with a corresponding change in number of tourists arrived, stands rejected.